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COOPERATIVE ENFORCEMENT PROGRAM NETS MIGRATORY BIRD TREATY ACT VIOLATORS

The arrests were at Calexico and San Ysidro, entry points on the California-Mexico border, in February and March. Defendants later were assessed fines totaling \$2,425.

The arrests highlighted this year's efforts along the California-Mexico border by several law-enforcement agencies to halt violations of United States game import regulations and Mexican game laws by United States hunters.

This year's program, occurring during the worldwide International Cooperation Year, marks the beginning of a more concerted United States-Mexican effort to curtail American hunters' widespread indifference to these laws, the Department's Fish and Wildlife Service said. Much of the intelligence which led to the arrests originated in Mexico.

Cooperating in the intensive crackdown were game wardens of the Mexican Department of Game and Forestry, game management agents of Interior's Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife, officers of the U. S. Customs Bureau and U. S. Border Patrol, and agents of the California Department of Fish and Game.

The arrests include three California men charged with illegally importing 45 doves from Mexico when the season was closed there. Officers said they found the dressed birds in a hidden compartment in the bottom of a cooler chest during a Customs check at Calexico. Each of the defendants was fined \$450 and sentenced to 30 days in jail. The sentence was suspended, and one year of probation was imposed. The three also were prohibited from hunting in either the United States or Mexico for one year.

Two other California men were fined \$300 each for illegally transporting 31 ducks, which officers said were concealed in a false compartment in a camper. Other violations included possession of birds in excess of bag limits and failure to declare game. In addition to penalties for the game violations, some administrative fines were assessed by Customs for concurrent violations of that agency's regulations.

One arrest resulted when illegally imported birds were found to have been flown by plane from Mexico to California.

John S. Gottschalk, Director of the Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife, said the two-year cooperative program has produced an effective working relationship among the participating agencies. The program will be broadened and intensified to effect better compliance with United States-Mexico laws protecting this valuable international wildlife resource, he said.

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